

Lowestoft Town Council
Extraordinary Meeting of the Climate and Ecological Emergency
Committee

First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
15:30 on 23 September 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Paul Page (Chair), Graham Parker and Deborah Ray (Deputy Chair).
Non-Councillor members John Sillett and Cathy Williams

In Attendance: Lauren Elliott (Project and Committee Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

Public: Three members of the public were in attendance (in person)

49. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report was explained and the meeting was welcomed.

50. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Craig and Pearce with reasons provided. Cllr Parker proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.
Rachel Bunn and Benjamin Poole were absent with no apologies received.

51. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

- 51.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from members on items on the Agenda – Cllrs Brooks, Page, Ray and Cathy Williams declared they were members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Cllr Parker declared he was a member of East Suffolk Council. John Sillett declared he was a member of East Suffolk Travel Association.
- 51.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

52. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 19 August 2024

Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

53. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – Cllr Page proposed items 56 and 58 be moved up in the agenda and the member of the public be asked to speak on the items; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

56. To receive a presentation on climate change and building resilient communities

Dr Guy Jackson presented the issues of climate change and the need to build resilient communities. In instances with limited resources, such as a lack of funding to improve coastal defences, that is where community resilience is crucial. Dr Jackson advised it would be beneficial to build links with all levels of government and engage with people and groups already active in the community and helping vulnerable people.

Cllr Ray queried what specific climate and biodiversity risks Lowestoft faced. Dr Jackson noted the specific risks were heatwaves, flooding, coastal surge, drought and the quality and quantity of water since East Anglia was the driest region.

Cllr Ray queried how Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) can increase the town's resilience. Dr Jackson advised LTC to elevate concerns on issues such as the flood risk, similar to the

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organisation Use Your Voice. Cllr Ray declared she was involved with Use Your Voice.

Dr Jackson was thanked for his presentation.

58. To consider issues relating to the energy and water supply of the built environment of Lowestoft and relevant actions:

58.1. Discuss the water threats posed to the community with the building of Sizewell C, in particular the shortage of water and coastal erosion - Water was essential to nuclear fission and it was noted that the shortage water and issue of waste disposal remained major concerns for the Sizewell C project.

Cllr Brooks proposed LTC send a resolution to East Suffolk Council (ESC) to say LTC remains unconvinced by their arguments on water availability and apply pressure and receive a response from ESC on these issues; seconded by Cllr Page. This would require approval from Full Council.

Dr Jackson was invited to speak on this item and agreed that LTC could put pressure on ESC to clarify their position, noting that the increasing frequency of drier summers would give these concerns on water availability more scientific weight.

Cllr Brooks amended the proposal to ask ESC to obtain scientific answers from Sizewell C on coastal erosion and the shortage of water. A vote was held with five votes in favour and one abstention.

54. Finance and Budget

54.1. To monitor expenditure by this Committee from the climate emergency budget, under delegated authority – Since the previous meeting there had been expenditure from the budget on van fuel and the bulky waste collection service.

54.2. To consider budget requirements for the 2025-2026 financial year and make a recommendation to Budget and Loan Working Group for consideration – Budget provision was requested to contribute towards an improved bus service. Budget provision was requested to make the bulky waste service permanent.

54.3. To consider use of climate budget for PV panels on the Town Hall and make a recommendation to Full Council – Cllr Page proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

55. To consider any matters to raise with the appropriate East Suffolk Council Cabinet member

Cllr Brooks noted that the appropriate contact in ESC for bins was Cllr Noble. ESC had a recent Cabinet meeting to consider the provision of an additional recycling bin to separate plastic from cardboard and paper. The Committee noted they had not consulted with the parish councils on this, and it was felt that the addition of a new bin did not address the issue of litter and contamination.

Cllr Brooks proposed more information be requested from ESC and query if they will consult with, and listen to, the parishes; seconded by Cllr Ray; five votes in favour and one abstention.

Cllr Ray had received a response from ESC officers regarding the litter pick event and confirmed they could supply the equipment. They recommended LTC arrange their own insurance, though if the litter pick was booked through ESC and undertaken on ESC land, then listed volunteers would be covered under ESC's insurance. Cllr Ray has asked the ESC officer to confirm if the area set for the litter pick is available and not clashing with existing litter picks.

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Cllr Brooks proposed it be delegated to officers to discuss this further with ESC and arrange to hold the event at the end of October 2024, with the locations for the pick set at the alleyways between Queens Road and Cambridge Road. Leaflets could be provided to the neighbours to notify them of the event. Bins would be required for the weeds and black bin bags for the litter.

56. To receive a presentation on climate change and building resilient communities

This item was brought forward in the meeting.

57. To consider the natural environment with regards to Lowestoft's parks and open spaces, and other ecology related matters, and relevant actions:

57.1. Discuss appropriate planting in parks and the reasoning for choices made in relation to the climate emergency

57.2. Discuss the feeding of ducks and swans in parks

Cllr Brooks requested both items be discussed together.

Cllr Brooks noted the policies on the website needed to be updated with the decisions of the Standing Orders Working Group.

Cllr Brooks proposed a stand-alone zoom meeting be arranged to review key environmental policies (such as those relating to trees and wildflowers) and form a combined coherent policy to refer to Full Council for consideration; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

58. To consider issues relating to the energy and water supply of the built environment of Lowestoft and relevant actions:

58.1. Discuss the water threats posed to the community with the building of Sizewell C, in particular the shortage of water and coastal erosion – This item was brought forward in the meeting.

59. To consider avenues of community engagement and relevant actions:

59.1. The merits of the Big Green Weekend Saturday event being held on the same weekend as the First Light Festival – Concerns were expressed on changing the date and location as it risked the Big Green Weekend being overshadowed by First Light, when it should be a separate LTC event.

It was noted that this change could allow the Big Green Weekend event to capitalise on the increased footfall in the town during First Light Festival and therefore it was suggested the event be held in Kensington Gardens.

This would need to be considered further as First Light Festival often use the entirety of Kensington Gardens.

Cllr Brooks proposed Cllr Parker not participate further in the debate as he was an East Suffolk Councillor and ESC were a major funder for the First Light Festival. The Chair did not call for this proposal to be seconded.

Cllr Page proposed alternative locations be considered for the Big Green Weekend alongside holding the event on the same weekend as First Light Festival; seconded by Cllr Ray; five votes in favour and one vote against.

59.2. Discuss organisations to approach to join the Plastic Free Communities Steering Group –

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Cllr Ray requested this be discussed in confidential session as the organisations had not yet been approached.

60. To consider public transport and alternative methods of travel and relevant actions:

60.1. Receive an update on the Public Transport survey – Cllr Parker proposed the survey results be reviewed by the Working Group to discuss and prepare the paper for East Suffolk Council; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

61. To review the decisions on this agenda from the perspective of nature

The Committee agreed their decisions had considered the perspective of nature.

62. Date of the next meeting

Monday 21 October 2024 – 15:30

63. Items for the next agenda and close

An item was requested to consider the Wash tidal barrier and its effect on the coastline.

An item was requested to discuss the Direct Air Capture.

An item was requested to query with the Excelsior Trust why their recent trip went to the Faroe Islands, where they cull large numbers of dolphins and porpoises.

64. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda

Cllr Page proposed the meeting be moved into confidential; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 17:01

Cllr Parker left the chamber at 17:02

Cllr Page proposed the non-councillor members be invited to remain for confidential session; seconded by Cllr Ray; all in favour.

59.2. Discuss organisations to approach to join the Plastic Free Communities Steering Group – There was a discussion on potential organisations to approach on joining the Plastic Free Communities Steering Group.

John Sillett left the chamber at 17:07

The goal of this initiative was to work with local companies to reduce their single use plastic and stop plastic going in the sea.

It was requested a link to the Plastic Free Communities site be sent to all members of this Committee along with a draft communication letter and for this item to be considered further at the next committee meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:19

Signed:
21 October 2024